

esprit orchestra

Alex Pauk **music director and conductor**

explore the new century

2 0 0 6 - 2 0 0 7



sanctuary

Sunday, October 22.06

Alex Pauk • conductor

Jane Mallett Theatre, St Lawrence Centre for the Arts

Esprit Orchestra Sunday October 22nd, 2006
Alex Pauk Music Director & Conductor

Flute

Douglas Stewart
Maria Pelletier (also piccolo)

Oboe/English Horn

Lesley Young

Oboe/Oboe d'amour

Karen Rotenberg

Clarinet

Colleen Cook
Richard Thomson
Greg James

Bassoon

Gerald Robinson
William Cannaway
(also contra bassoon)

Horn

Garry Pattison
Vincent Barbee

Piano

Lydia Wong

Trumpet

Stuart Laughton
Raymond Tizzard

Trombone

Robert Ferguson

Bass Trombone/

Euphonium
Herbert Poole

Tuba

Scott Irvine

Harp

Erica Goodman

Percussion

Blair McKay
Trevor Tureski
Graham Hargrove
Mark Duggan

Violin 1

Fujiko Imajishi
Concertmaster
Jayne Maddison
Corey Gemmell
Anne Armstrong
Sonia Vizante-Bucsa
Pamela Attariwala

Violin 2

Dominique Laplante
Louise Pauls
Nicole Zarry
James Aylesworth
Ronald Mah
Michael Sproule

Viola

Katharine Rapoport
Josh Greenlaw
Capella Sherwood
Nicholas Papadakis

Cello

Paul Widner
Marianne Pack
Olga Laktionova
Elaine Thompson

Bass

Tom Hazlitt
Peter Pavlovsky





esprit orchestra

Alex Pauk, Music Director & Conductor

Sunday October 22nd, 2006

Jane Mallett Theatre, St. Lawrence Centre for the Arts

8:00 p.m. - CONCERT

7:15 p.m. - pre-concert composers talk

PROGRAMME

Melodien

Three Inventions

for chamber orchestra

György Ligeti

George Benjamin

INTERMISSION

Sanctuary

Kazabazua

Paul Frehner

Brian Current

esprit orchestra

Alex Pauk music director and conductor

explore the new century 2006-2007



tickets for esprit orchestra concerts
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1

sanctuary
Oct. 22.06

2

sophia plus
Nov. 26.06

3

la joie
Feb. 11.07

4

May 13.07

sophia plus

The presence of guest composer Sophia Gubaidulina makes Esprit's concert a very special event – one associated to an artist of the highest stature on the world stage. Her composition *Seven Words* refers directly to two works entitled *The Seven Last Words of Our Savior on the Cross* and Joseph Haydn's set of seven orchestral movements. The spatial aspect of Current's *Concertino* is integral to the charm of this piece which was specially composed for the virtuosity of Robert Aitken. Also having a work specially composed for her, Louise Bessette gives the second performance of Arcuri's *Concerto* following its premiere with I Musici de Montréal several weeks earlier.

Sunday, November 26.06

Alex Pauk • conductor

Friedrich Lips • bayan – Paul Widner • cello
Robert Aitken • flute – Louise Bessette • piano

Sophia Gubaidulina (Russia) *Seven Words*

Brian Current (Canada) *Concertino*

Sophia Gubaidulina (Russia) *De Profundis*

Serge Arcuri (Canada) *Concerto for Piano
and String Orchestra*

note:

location & time for all esprit orchestra concerts:
8 pm concert / 7:15 pm pre-concert talk
Jane Mallett Theatre, St Lawrence Centre for the Arts,
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esprit programming is subject to change without notice

www.espritorchestra.com



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ALEX PAUK

MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR

Alex Pauk, composer, conductor, educator, revitalized orchestral life for composers across Canada in 1983 by founding Esprit Orchestra as Canada's only orchestra devoted to new music. Esprit, with a core of 50 top instrumentalists, Canada's best soloists, and an annual subscription series in Toronto, encourages composers to take bold new directions. Through building and sustaining Esprit's high calibre performances, commissioning programme, innovative programming (80% Canadian), recordings, performing arts videos and DVDs, *Toward a Living Art* Education Programme, *In Your Space* outreach initiatives, tours and International relations, and interdisciplinary arts and media ventures, Pauk has been a leader in developing and promoting Canadian music at home and abroad. As a conductor he attains excellent performances on stage and in recordings. All Esprit concerts are recorded for broadcast on CBC Radio and/or Internationally. His innovative programming and commitment to the community through Esprit have garnered SOCAN and Chalmers Awards as well as three Lieutenant Governor's Awards. He was named *Musician of the Year* (1999) by peers at the Toronto Musicians' Association and he has helped many composers advance their careers through commissions, high profile performances, recordings and broadcasts. Pauk's recordings of music by Canadian composers Chris Paul Harman and Brian Current helped them win, respectively, prizes in the International Rostrum of Composers (Paris) and Barlow (USA) competitions. Pauk's commissioning, of Canadian composers of all ages and stylistic trends, is central to his work. His six CD's featuring Canadian music on the CBC Records Label are important in the overall catalogue of CDs in Canada and his work with performing arts filmmaker Larry Weinstein of Rhombus Media, with projects such as *Ravel's Brain*, have set new standards in the genre. Since 1985, Pauk's *Toward a Living Art* Programme with Esprit has provided approximately 1,500 students annually with a range of experiences; "sitting in" with Esprit musicians at rehearsals and performances, composing for Esprit, attending special student concerts and workshops, receiving free concert tickets and study guides. Pauk has been a leader in taking new music out of the concert hall and to people in their communities with performances in unusual locations such as the CN Tower, night clubs, Toronto Public Libraries etc. He has provided opportunities for choreographers and dancers, stage and lighting designers, actors and directors and media and visual artists to combine their talents with Esprit in adventurous cross-disciplinary projects. Pauk has lead Esprit on several Canadian tours (including Calgary Winter Olympics Arts Festival 1988, Western Canadian Tour 1998, and Montréal/Nouvelles Musiques Festival 2005) and in 1997 initiated an ongoing exchange and touring project with The Netherlands, a venture which included Esprit's debut European tour in 1999 and remains vital to this day.

Alex Pauk has a very wide range of experience as a composer with works for every kind of performing ensemble (some including electroacoustic sound), the theatre as well as dance companies. Revealing this depth of experience, his most notable compositions of recent years include; *Touch Piece*, a multimedia work for full orchestra, 16 channel surround sound with digital sound track, sounds of nature and altered orchestral sound projected from loudspeakers, multi-screen video environment (images of nature and the Cosmos) and fabric sculptures with special theatrical lighting; *Farewell to Heaven*, a full length work for the Menaka Thakkar Indian Dance Company (blending Southeast Asian musical elements with Western orchestral sounds); three works involving important Canadian virtuosos: *Concerto for Harp and Orchestra* (Erica Goodman harp), *Concerto for Two Pianos and Orchestra* (Duo Turgeon pianos) and *Flute Quintet* (Robert Aitken flute with Cuarteto Latinoamericano). Currently Pauk is composing a work for large ensemble commissioned by La Société de musique contemporaine du Québec.

GYÖRGY LIGETI COMPOSER

"Late-20th-century modernism is not known for its accessibility. The very term 'modern music' still sends many people running in the opposite direction. But if anyone can lure listeners in, it is surely Györgi Ligeti. Some may be put off by the high level of dissonance in his music or by its complexity, yet for those with open ears and minds, Ligeti's sonic canvases have colors and textures as engaging and fantastic as the best paintings of Paul Klee or Vassily Kandinsky."

Andrew Farah-Colton

György Ligeti was born in Dicsőszentmárton (today Tírnáveni) on 28 May 1923. He studied at the Klausenburg conservatory with Ferenc Farkas from 1941 to 1943. A Jewish, Hungarian family in Nazi Hungary, Ligeti's family was imprisoned in a labor camp in 1942. Only he survived. After the war he was able to resume studies in Budapest, at the Liszt Academy, again with Farkas, and with the well-known Hungarian composer Sándor Veress.

Ligeti's creative outlook has been formed by his experiences under two dictatorships – those of Hitler and Stalin. As Ligeti has remarked of the traumatic experiences which have shaped his life and artistic outlook, "I am permanently scarred; I will be overcome by revenge fantasies to the end of my days."

In December 1956, after the Hungarian revolution, he left his home country for artistic and political reasons. During his work as a free-lancer at the West German Radio electronic studios in Cologne (1957-58) he thoroughly studied the music of Karlheinz Stockhausen, Mauricio Kagel and Pierre Boulez which found its musical expression in his work *Artikulation* (1958). *Artikulation* as well as the work *Atmosphères* for large orchestra brought immediate recognition in the western musical scene. A leading member of the international avant-garde since the 1960's, he lived mostly in Hamburg and Vienna, becoming an Austrian citizen in 1967 and teaching at the Hamburg Musikhochschule as a professor of composition from 1973 to 1989.

A feeling of loss and nostalgia characterizes much of his output, often evoked by the haunting modalities of East European folk music – but pathos is balanced by absurdist humour. Early in his career he developed the micropolyphony which later was to become one of the most significant features of his music. In his early pieces such as the a-cappella choral work *Éjszaka - Reggel* and his first successful work in the West, *Apparitions*, this style is already extremely distinctive.

In Ligeti's works of the later 1960s and early 1970s the lines gradually become clearer than in the cloudy sound-masses of his early works, reintroducing a sense – albeit a rather peculiar one – of melody, counterpoint and harmony, while rhythm also resurfaces, often in the form of crazily superimposed pulses or psychotically fast instrumental outbursts.

Realizing an idea that had been preoccupying his mind for quite some time, Ligeti created a first full-length stage work *Le Grand Macabre* (1974-77) after a fable by Michel de Ghelderode. Ligeti's complex polyrhythmic compositional technique forms the basis of the works written in the 1980s and 1990s (for example the *Etudes pour piano*, the *Concerto for piano and orchestra*, the *Concerto for violin and orchestra* and the *Sonata for viola solo*).

Numerous prizes, awards and distinctions are proofs of the high esteem accorded to his work of and to him as a teacher and mentor of a whole generation of composers. Apart from his membership of the Hamburg Free Academy of Arts and the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts in Munich, other prizes and distinctions: member of the Order 'Pour le mérite' of Science and Art, *Commandeur dans l'Ordre National des Arts et Lettres*, *Prix de composition musicale de la Fondation Prince Pierre de Monaco*, the Music Award of the Balzan Foundation and the Praemium Imperiale in 1991, Ernst-von-Siemens Music Award and the UNESCO-IMC (International Music Council)-Music Prize. On 9 October 2000 he was awarded the Sibelius Prize of the Jenny and Antti Wihuri Foundation in Helsinki, and in 2001 the Kyoto-Prize for Arts and Science for the body of his work. Ligeti was honored with the medal of the senate of the City of Hamburg on his 80th birthday and the City of Frankfurt awarded him the Theodor W. Adorno prize in 2003. In 2004, he was awarded the Polar Music Prize of the Royal Swedish Academy of Music, the Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society, the ECHO KLASSIK 2004 for his lifework and the Frankfurt Music Prize 2005.

Ligeti died on 12 June 2006 in Vienna after a long illness.



GEORGE BENJAMIN

COMPOSER

George Benjamin was born in London in 1960, started piano lessons at the age of seven and composing when he was nine. From 1974 he studied composition and piano with Peter Gellhorn and in 1976 he went to Paris to study composition with Olivier Messiaen and piano with Yvonne Loriod at the Paris Conservatoire. Later, at King's College Cambridge, he studied under Alexander Goehr.

Benjamin first came to public prominence attention when, in 1980, *Ringed by the Flat Horizon* was performed at the Proms in London by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Mark Elder. The piece has since achieved a remarkable international performance record, as have his the two subsequent works, *A Mind of Winter* and *At First Light*.

George Benjamin has been the focus of numerous festivals around Europe and America. In France, his reputation has flourished and in March 1992 he was invited to direct a new music festival at the Opéra Bastille named 'Carte blanche à George Benjamin' of which the centrepiece was *Upon Silence*. The French government has awarded him the title of *Chevalier dans l'ordre des arts et lettres* for his outstanding contribution to French musical life.

In America, Benjamin's music has been widely performed and he has built up a particularly close relationship with the Tanglewood Festival. A commission from the Chicago SO resulted in *Dance Figures*, presented by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra under Daniel Barenboim in Chicago in 2005.

In London at the South Bank Centre Benjamin curated the first 'Meltdown' festival in July 1993. In July 1995, the opening of the 75th Salzburg Festival was marked by a concert of Benjamin's works, given by the Ensemble Modern in which he conducted the world premiere of *Three Inventions for Chamber Orchestra*. Large-scale presentations of Benjamin's music were evident in 2005 in Berlin (with the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester), Madrid (Spanish National Orchestra) and Strasbourg (Festival Musica).

George Benjamin is also a major figure in British musical life. *Palimpsest I* was commissioned by the LSO for a world tour under Pierre Boulez, and in 2002 the same performers gave the world premiere of *Palimpsest II* to mark the beginning of the LSO's season-long retrospective of his work, 'By George'. *Palimpsests*, as the two pieces became known, won the RPS prize in 2003. Most of Benjamin's works are recorded on Nimbus Records, and two new CDs were released in 2004 to great critical acclaim. They include the premiere recordings of *Palimpsests* and *Shadowlines*, and Benjamin performing his own *Piano Sonata*.

George Benjamin lives in London, and is the Henry Purcell Professor of Composition at King's College, London. Most recently he was elected to the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts, only the fourth time such an honour has been bestowed on a British composer. In 2001 he was awarded the Deutsche Symphonie Orchester's first ever Schoenberg Prize for composition.

PAUL FREHNER COMPOSER

Born in Montreal in 1970, Paul Frehner completed his Doctorate in music in 2004 at McGill University where he studied composition with Denys Bouliane. During his Master's degree at McGill, completed in 1998, he studied composition with Brian Cherney and orchestration with Bengt Hambraeus.

Frehner's works have been played in Canada and abroad by professional soloists, ensembles and orchestras including, among others, Almeida Opera, the Esprit Orchestra, the Prague Philharmonia, the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, the North Holland Philharmonic Orchestra, the CBC Vancouver Orchestra, the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, pianist André Ristic, the Ensemble Contemporaine de Montreal and the Quasar Saxophone Quartet.

In 2001, Frehner was commissioned by the Genesis Foundation to compose *Sirius on Earth*, a one hundred-minute opera based on a libretto by Angela Murphy. Co-produced by Almeida Opera and Aldeburgh Productions, *Sirius on Earth* was premiered in the 2003 Almeida Opera Festival in London, England. It subsequently toured to Aldeburgh where it opened the 2003 Proms season in Snape Maltings concert hall.

Frehner has received numerous awards and mentions both in Canada and on the international scene. Notable among these was the First Prize in the Prague Philharmonia's Symphony of the Third Millennium Composition Competition for his orchestral work, 'Elixirs'. It received its world premiere on January 1, 2001, by the Prague Philharmonia in the Rudolfinum and was subsequently broadcast on Czech National Radio and Television. In 2000 he won First Prize in the Jeunesses Musicales World Orchestra's International Composition Competition for Overture 2000, a work for large orchestra. It was premiered January 1, 2000 in the Berlin Konzerthaus by the JMW.O.

Frehner's recently completed compositions include: *Sanctuary*, a twenty-five minute orchestral work commissioned by the Esprit Orchestra; *Tightrope*, a concerto for three accordions and orchestra, and *Lila*, a work for two spatially-separated orchestras commissioned by the Ensemble Contemporain de Montréal and Bit 20 (Norway).

Currently, Paul Frehner holds the post of Composer in Residence at the Chapelle historique du Bon Pasteur in Montreal and was recently appointed Assistant Professor of Music in composition at the University of Western Ontario.



BRIAN CURRENT COMPOSER

Brian Current lives in Toronto. A 2005 Guggenheim Fellow and recipient of the 2003 Barlow Prize, **Brian Current** has established himself as one of North America's leading young composers. His music, lauded and performed internationally as well as broadcast in over 35 countries, is renowned for its energy, wit and daring bravado.

Raised in Ottawa, Brian Current studied music at McGill University in Montreal with Bengt Hambreus and John Rea. He later completed his Ph.D. in composition on full fellowship from the University of California at Berkeley in 2002, where he was also active as a conductor. In 2000 he was chosen as a participant in the National Arts Centre's conductor training workshop with Jorma Panula and Pinchas Zukerman. He has since been featured conducting his own music and other works with New Music Concerts, Soundstreams, CBC's *In Performance* and the Esprit Orchestra's New Waves Festival. Recently, the Glenn Gould School appointed Brian as conductor and artistic director of its New Music Ensemble.

Brian Current's music has been performed across North America and abroad by the Esprit Orchestra, the American Composers Orchestra (Carnegie Hall), the Oakland Symphony, the Indianapolis Symphony, the Winnipeg Symphony, the Warsaw National Philharmonic, the Deagu Ensemble (Korea), the CBC Radio Orchestra, the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, *Soundstreams*, the Gryphon Trio and others. Upcoming performances are scheduled by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (*Faster Still*) and the VOX festival of the New York City Opera, who will present a version of his chamber opera *Airline Icarus*.

In 2001, Brian won the Grand Prize in the CBC National Competition for Young Composers, for his piece *For the Time Being*, which then went on to win Selected Work (under 30) at the International Rostrum of Composers in Paris. In 2002 it opened the inaugural concert of the Warsaw Autumn Festival, conducted by Antoni Wit.



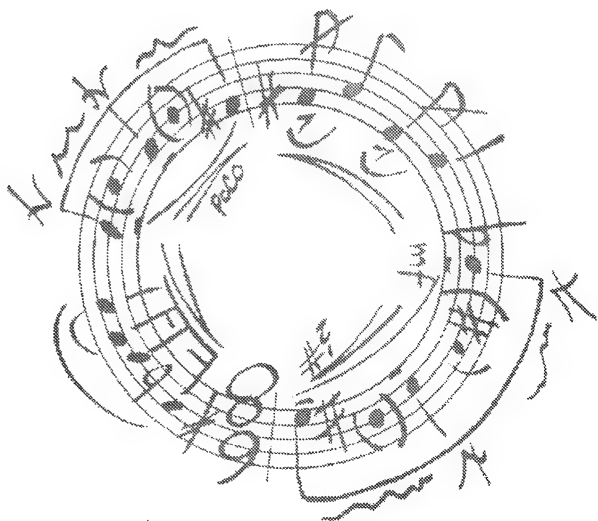
MELODIEN

GYÖRGY LIGETI

In the 1970s, Ligeti's writing became more transparent, even melodic, though in a highly personal, elusive manner. The flickering melodic shapes of *Melodien* seem to be a step ahead of the listener's ear, and, in later works, he transforms the idea of melody and harmonic structure through the use of micro-intervals and deviations from the tempered scale.

Written in 1971, this has always seemed one of Mr Ligeti's most spellbinding pieces, full of textual delight and of melodic lines, hence the title, that branch out and explore. Listening to the score is something like watching a plant grow. And from the perspective of history, the work brilliantly records a moment when western music was beginning to remember its nineteenth-century Romantic past and discover new possibilities in repetitive figuration. Postmodernism and minimalism are here in bud.

Melodien is a one-movement piece that begins with swirling, high-pitched winds whose sinuous lines turn into a flowing stream of iridescent instrumental colors. The middle of the piece is played by the full orchestra, providing a clear cadence point, which divides the piece into two parts. These two parts are quite symmetrical, both of them ending with a beautiful solo played by two French horns coming in the foreground.



THREE INVENTIONS for chamber orchestra

GEORGE BENJAMIN

Commissioned by Betty Freeman for the 1995 Salzburg Festival, this work is scored for an ensemble of 24 players: 7 winds, 4 brass, harp, piano, 2 percussionists and 9 strings. The discrepancy in length and character of the three movements is intentional - two relatively short and light movements preceding a much longer and darker conclusion.

In the first *Invention*, mainly serene and luminous in atmosphere, a brief introduction leads to a sustained flugel-horn solo whose melodic curves create constantly transforming harmonic implications.

The second *Invention* is fast, loud and rhythmic. A virtuoso cor anglais solo announces what appears to be a conventional triple metre; however, within a very brief time all manner of irregular figuration and unexpected tempo juxtapositions contort this metre beyond recognition. Half-way through, the texture launches into an energetic tutti; only at the very end is metrical regularity re-instated by an acrobatic clarinet solo.

The final *Invention* mirrors the first in technical conception, but the tone is radically different. Antiphonal tuned gongs and bass drums surround a network of materials which weave through the whole ensemble: slow bass octaves, floating consonant harmonies, rushing filigree scales. As these materials rotate across the structure in ever changing combinations they encounter a variety of foreground melodic solos: initially a serpentine contra-bassoon, later a menacing euphonium and more florid violins and violas. As the movement progresses, harmony and rhythm mutate into constantly new territory, but the heavy, bass-dominated pulse which underpins the texture remains remorselessly regular until the very end.

G. B.



SANCTUARY

PAUL FREHNER

I was in the early stages of my work on the score of *Sanctuary* around the period of Christmas, 2004. It was around this time that the immense earthquake off the coast of Sumatra resulted in the deadly tsunami that struck numerous countries in and around the Indian Ocean. The magnitude of the catastrophe was and still is mind-boggling. I, as countless others, could only watch in helpless horror and awe the news reports that described the unfolding and seemingly never-ending tragedy: vast numbers of dead and an even greater number of people for whom survival became very much an issue as they lost literally everything.

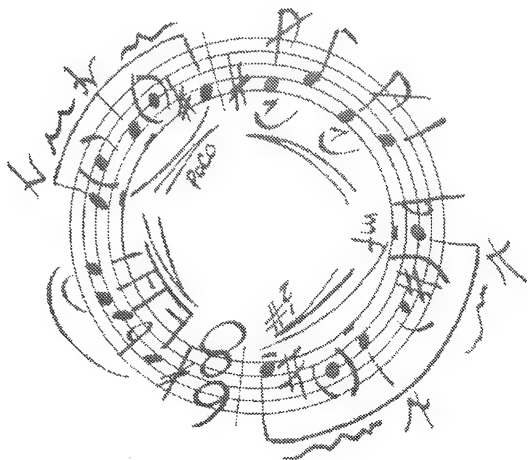
Sanctuary is my reaction to this cataclysmic event. It is both a reflection on sanctuary lost and an expression of hope.

The piece is divided into two movements. The first movement is expansive in breadth and musical gesture. I'm trying to depict an imaginary haven, a vast landscape that slowly evolves over time. References and allusions are made to the musics of various Eastern cultures, though filtered through a Western viewpoint. Numerous solos emerge and fade back into the texture. They are like the voices of individuals that are heard briefly before passing on.

The opening of the second movement shatters the idyllic mood established by the first. My intention here is not to depict musically a tsunami, it is rather to convey the sense of loss, confusion and despair that arises when a situation spirals out of control, when decisions are taken away and a person is guided by irresistible outside forces. The piece ends with a brief, fragmented return to the soloistic material from the first movement.

The work was commissioned by Esprit with funding from the Canada Council and CBC Radio Music.

P.F.



KAZABAZUA

BRIAN CURRENT

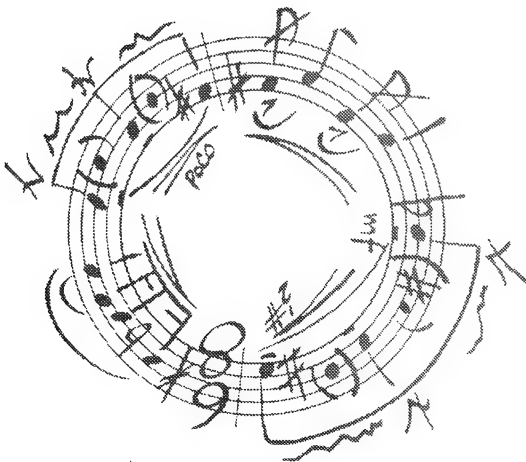
Kazabazua (pronounced *Kaja-Bajua*) was commissioned in 2003 by Alex Pauk and the Esprit Orchestra with funds from the Canada Council for the Arts. It is dedicated to Esprit on the occasion of their 20th anniversary.

Much of the music was written at a retreat in the Gatineau hills North of Ottawa, near the town of Kazabazua, Quebec. I remember being struck by the Shazaam-like magic of the name, which also had a remarkable meaning: on the town's site, the river vanishes underground for a spell and then re-emerges further along. *Kazabazua* is an Algonquin word that means “disappearing waters”, or “hidden waters”. This had psychological connotations that I thought were appropriate to the piece, as well as captured a sense of its flow and restlessness, its play with levels of brightness and depictions of gravity.

At the time the piece was composed I was beginning to experiment with constantly accelerating tempos, a feature that has appeared in several works since. The idea is that during some sections, the music is always speeding up, as if written for a metronome that only gets faster. Gestures continually accelerate into a blur and then disappear over the horizon, creating an environment of constant momentum and renewal.

The performance tonight will feature a revised version of the 2003 piece. This 2006 version will appear on an upcoming commercial recording of my orchestral works and I'm very grateful to Alex Pauk and the Esprit for contributing their talents to this disc.

B.C.





esprit orchestra

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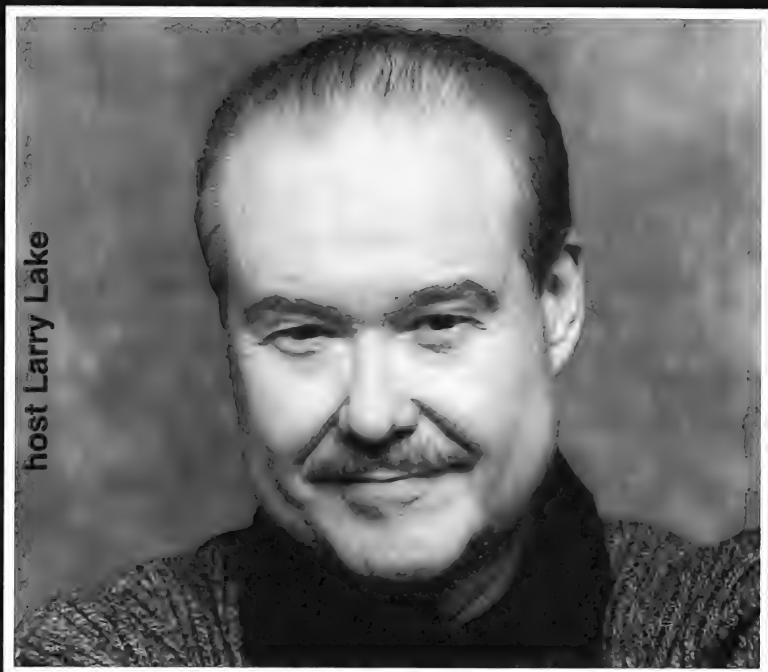
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Two New Hours on CBC Radio Two (94.1 in Toronto)

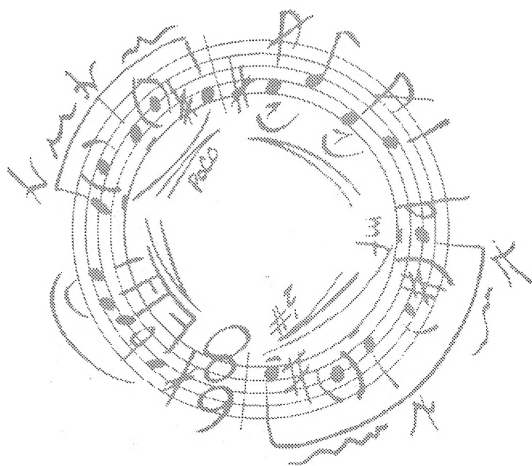
Sundays 10:00 pm to midnight

Host: Larry Lake

Tonight's performance will be recorded for future broadcast by Two New Hours on CBC Radio Two.

Esprit Orchestra's *Mystery and Illusion* concert (December 1, 2005) will be broadcasted on Sunday, October 29, 2006. The performance of Pulitzer Prize winning work *Ice Field* will be included in the works featured in this broadcast.

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